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ABSTRACT

This study compared the attitudes toward competition in the 4-H Club program in Carroll County, Ohio, as seen by 4-H members, their parents, and 4-H advisors. A random sampling was used to compare the attitudes among the three respondent groups (211 of 278 4-H Club members responded to the questionnaire, 181 of 587 parents, and 32 of 35 advisors). From the results it was concluded that (1) girl 4-H members were more competitive than boys; (2) learning a skill or project and having fun were the main reasons for joining; (3) parents wanted their children to join to have the experience of working together, learn a project or skill, and gain self-confidence and responsibility; (4) members liked 4-H activities and project work the most; (5) parents liked project work and the development of leadership, self-confidence, and responsibility the most; (6) members preferred 4-H activities and more project work at local meetings; (7) parents preferred more project work at meetings and better trained advisors; (8) all groups indicated that age and abilities should be given more consideration in competitive activities; (9) all groups stated that more emphasis should be placed on the member doing the best job that he or she is capable of doing; (10) older members preferred compulsory grading of projects; and (11) older members preferred competition. (Author/JS)

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ABSTRACT

ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPETITION IN THE 4-H PROGRAM IN CARROLL COUNTY, OHIO

A THESIS

By

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1968

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IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION WORKERS

This study compares the attitudes toward competition in the 4-H Club program in Carroll County, Ohio as seen by 4-H members, their parents, and 4-H advisors.

A random sample was used to compare the attitudes among the three respondent groups. There were eleven conclusions drawn from the results of this study. Girl 4-H members were found to be more competitive than the boy 4-H members. Learning a skill and having fun were the two reasons most often mentioned by 4-H members for joining a 4-H Club. These are only two of the conclusions drawn from the investigation.

County Extension Agents responsible for developing and evaluating County 4-H programs should find this study helpful in planning future 4-H club programs. Area and State Extension staff should find the results of this study useful in working with County Extension Agents, 4-H Advisory Committees and in group discussions regarding the purposes of competition in the 4-H club program.

ATTITUDES TOWARD COMPETITION IN THE
4-H PROGRAM IN CARROLL COUNTY, OHIO

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the attitudes toward competition in the 4-H Club program in Carroll County, Ohio, as viewed by the 4-H Club members, their parents and advisors.

Specific Objectives

To carry out the purpose outlined above, the following specific objectives were formulated:

1. To develop and validate an attitude scale to measure attitudes toward competition in the 4-H Club program.
2. To compare the attitudes of 4-H members, their parents and advisors toward competition in the 4-H Club program.
3. To compare the reasons given by 4-H Club members for joining a 4-H Club with the reasons given by their parents for wanting them to join.
4. To compare the items most liked in the 4-H Club program as stated by the 4-H members, their parents and advisors.
5. To compare the suggestions for improvement of the 4-H Club program as stated by the 4-H members, their parents and advisors.
6. To recommend modifications for the 4-H Club program through the process of program planning.

Methodology

An attitude scale was developed and validated with a selected group of 4-H Club members who were divided into a competitive and non-competitive group based on their 4-H participation and experiences.

Point values ranging from five through one were assigned each possible answer. A chi square value was computed for each statement, comparing the competitive sample to the non-competitive sample. Only

those 19 statements showing a chi square value significant at the .05 level were then used for final attitude scale.

A jury of nine area Extension Agents, 4-H, were asked to mark the statements as a competitive 4-H Club member would mark them. This was used as a check.

By using the random sampling procedure, approximately one-third of the 4-H Club members were selected by clubs to make up the sample for this study. The parents and advisors of these same members were included.

The sample included 278 of the 816 4-H Club members, or over 34 per cent of the member population. Of these 278 Club members, 211 or nearly 76 per cent returned the questionnaire. Of the 587 parents, 181 or about 31 per cent of the population were involved in the sample, with 1[illegible] or nearly 65 per cent returning completed questionnaires. Thirty-five or nearly 33 per cent of the 107 4-H advisors were included in the sample. Thrity-two advisors, or over 91 per cent of the 35 sampled, returned completed questionnaires.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained in this study were analyzed by using mean weighted scores, medians, percentages, rank order correlations and comparisons.

An attitude score was computed for each respondent and the median score figured for the entire sample. Using the individual attitude scores, percentages exceeding and not exceeding the median were figured for each group of respondents. Significant differences were then figured to determine if a difference in attitude toward competition was present.

A mean weighted score was computed for each statement for each group of respondents. Spearmen's Rank Order Correlation (Rho) was used to compute the rank order correlation between groups.

The responses to the free response questions were categorized and a percentage figured for the number of respondents in each group listing

that item. These items were then ranked in descending order, according to the percentage of respondents within the group, and then the percentages and rank order was compared.

Summary of Findings

This study revealed several important findings regarding the attitude toward competition in the 4-H Club program as seen by the three audiences; 4-H Club members, their parents, and advisors. These findings are as follows:

Comparison of the Difference in Attitudes toward Competition

When comparing the differences in attitude toward competition in the 4-H Club program of the three groups, we find that the only group in which significant difference appeared was between the boy and girl 4-H Club members, with the girls showing a stronger orientation toward competition than the boys.

Although there was no significant difference between the three groups compared: 4-H members, their parents, and advisors, the findings did suggest that the parents were more competitively oriented than the members and that the advisors were more competitively oriented than the parents. There was also an indication that the more tenured advisors were more competitively oriented than the less tenured advisors.

When summarizing the free response questions, a considerable difference in the responses was found. Those responses received to each of the questions, in terms of the per cent of respondents mentioning the item, are listed below.

The summary of the question of why a member joined a 4-H Club or why his parents wanted him to join, shows both similarities and major differences, with some of these relating to competition.

Nearly seventy per cent of the members listed "wanting to learn a skill" or "project work", with this being the most often mentioned reason

for wanting to join a 4-H Club. This reason ranked second in number of times mentioned reason, while no parents chose to mention this reason.

Nearly nineteen per cent of the members wanted "to be with friends and other people" while thirteen per cent of the parents listed this item, being respectively the third and fifth most frequent reason given.

The fourth most often mentioned item by the members, "Working with others", was the one most often mentioned by the parents, with nearly forty per cent of the parents and fifteen per cent of the members indicating this.

The fifth most mentioned item by the parents was not given by any member. This reason, "competition and contests" was named by nearly thirteen per cent of the parents.

The second free response question, "The things I like most about 4-H Club work are?" revealed several differences in reponse between the three groups.

The part of the program most liked by the members was the "activities and community service projects" with nearly forty-two per cent of the members indicating this area, while it was mentioned by ten per cent of parents, falling fourth in order of frequency.

Nearly forty-one per cent of the members and twenty-five per cent of the parents mentioned "project work and skill development" as their favored area. This ranked first for the parents and second for the members.

Both groups ranked "working together" in third place, with about sixteen per cent of the members and twenty-one per cent of the parents giving this response.

The item listed second most frequently by the parents, by twenty-two per cent, was "development of leadership, self-confidence and responsibility", but this was listed only infrequently by members.

Both groups listed competition, but to a less frequent degree than the afore mentioned items. Nearly thirteen per cent of the members and

eight per cent of the parents indicated that this was a part of the 4-H program that they liked.

Although the members mentioned competition more frequently than the parents, it is important to note, in terms of this study, that one out of every five older members, fourteen years of age and older, and only one out of eleven younger members, thirteen years of age or less, mentioned this item.

The advisors listed "working with members, seeing them learn, improve and do a good job", as well as "sharing with them the pride of accomplishment" as the things they liked most about the 4-H Club program.

The third free response question, "The following are my suggestions for improving the 4-H program....." drew less response than did the two previous questions, but it was a wide range of response. There were some intriguing thoughts in regard to competition, as well as in other areas of the 4-H Club program that the three audiences considered important.

All three groups indicated that there should be more project work at the local club meeting. Seven per cent of the members listed this, third in order, while over nine per cent of the parents and six per cent of the advisors felt improvement was needed here. The parents noted this as the area most in need of improvement while the advisors listed it fifth.

Members and advisors asked that there be compulsory project grading, attendance at meetings and participation in activities. Seven per cent of the members gave this as their fourth most mentioned item, while over twelve per cent of the advisors mentioned some form of the above, being their most frequent suggestion. It is noteworthy that more than twice the percentage of older members, as compared to younger members, suggested that grading of projects be compulsory, while more younger members suggested required attendance at meetings and participation in activities.

Both adult groups suggested that age and abilities should be considered more in competitive activities and that more emphasis needed to be placed on self-competition, that is, doing the best job possible, rather than competition between self and others. Over nine per cent of the advisors listed this as the second most frequent item, with nearly six per cent of parent listing it fourth in order.

Six per cent of the advisors also mentioned that awards should be distributed more widely than they are at the present time, this being their third most frequent suggestion.

The items most often mentioned by the members do not seem to have a direct bearing on competition, other than that nearly ten per cent said that they were satisfied with the program as it is now, and over nine per cent would like to see more 4-H activities.

Another frequently mentioned item by both parents and advisors was that there was a need for more and better training of 4-H advisors. Over seven per cent of the parents and six per cent of the advisors mentioned this.

Other items mentioned that had a bearing on the question of competition was the fact that all three groups mentioned that the member, not the adults involved, should do the actual project work and the preparation necessary for participation in activities.

The older members were the only group that suggested that more awards should be added to the 4-H Club program.

Rank Order Correlation

There was a high rank order correlation of the various statements in the attitude scale between groups, all being significant at the .05 level. There was a higher correlation between adult groups, parents and advisors, than between the adult groups and the members, either parents and members or advisors and members.

The statements that showed a rather consistent difference in ranking between all groups were: "All members with livestock projects should have registered animals", "4-H Clubs expect their members to win when they participate in activities", "Many times, those participating in an activity who are not selected as winners are more deserving of praise and recognition than the winners", "If a 4-H member receives a low grade on a project, he should be encouraged to take an easier project the next year" and "Clubs measure their worth by the number of awards their members win".

Conclusions

The following conclusions were based upon the findings of the study.

1. The girl 4-H members were more competitive than the boy 4-H members.
2. The two reasons most often mentioned by the members for joining a 4-H Club were to learn a project or skill and to have fun.
3. Parents wanted their children to join a 4-H Club to have the experience of working together, to learn a project or skill and to gain self-confidence and responsibility.
4. The members liked the 4-H activities and project work the most.
5. Parents of members liked project work and the development of leadership, self-confidence and responsibility the most.
6. Members prefer 4-H activities and more project work at the local 4-H Club meetings.
7. Parents prefer more project work at meetings and better trained advisors.
8. All groups indicated that age and abilities should be considered more in competitive activities.
9. All groups stated that more emphasis should be placed on the member doing the best job he or she is capable of doing.

10. Older members seem to prefer compulsory grading of projects more than do younger members.

11. Older members indicated a stronger desire for competition than did younger members.

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